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## IRELAND REGION

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Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2026

Mr Paul Givan  
NI Minister of Education  
Department of Education  
Rathgael House  
Balloo Road  
Rathgill  
Bangor  
BT19 7PR

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you on behalf of Unite the union which represents many SEN classroom assistants and other school support workers working with SEN children.

We welcome the news that the Westminster government has announced a £5 billion fund to provide up to 90% debt cancellation for local authorities in England in relation to historic SEND overspends.

This is highly apposite given your department's draft plans for education which proposes drastic changes and cuts to SEN provision in Northern Ireland - driven by budgetary pressures. These proposals have resulted in very serious concerns among our membership - who include some of the lowest paid workers in the public sector.

Can we ask whether Northern Ireland will receive the full Barnett consequential from this debt cancellation in England? Also, will any additional funding arising be ring-fenced for the Department of Education and, in particular, for SEN provision?

In light of any additional funding paid, will this enable your department to review your drastic proposals for the SEN sector?

My members would welcome any information and clarity you can offer in regard to this matter.

Yours respectfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K Ellison".

Kieran Ellison  
Unite Regional Officer

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**Susan Fitzgerald**  
Regional Secretary

[www.unitetheunion.org/ireland](http://www.unitetheunion.org/ireland)

**Sharon Graham**  
General Secretary